

- - REMARKS - -

Claims 1-20 were pending in the application. Claims 1, 3, 9 and 11 have been amended. The changes to the amended claim from the previous version to the rewritten version are shown above with brackets for deleted matter and underlines for added matter. New claims 21 and 22 have been added. No new matter has been added as a result of this amendment.

In the outstanding final Office Action, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-11 and 13-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,373,472 to Palalau et al. (hereinafter "Palalau") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,271,637 to Kushion ("Kushion"). Claims 4, 8, 12 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Palalau in view of Kushion, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,270,689 to Hermann ("Hermann"). The claim rejections are respectfully traversed. The claims have nevertheless been amended to clarify the claimed invention and to eliminate any ambiguity that may have been the basis for the rejection.

Independent claims 1 and 9, and newly added independent claims 21 and 22, are each directed to an input device comprising a mistake counter means for monitoring the manual operation of function switches (or a manual operating pad) to count mistakes. In particular, the mistake counter means determines that the preceding manual operation of the function switches (or manual operating pad) is a mistake when another function switch is manually operated (or the pad is operated in another direction) within a predetermined period of time after any one of the function switches (or manual operating pad) has been manually operated, and increments the counted number of mistakes by counting the preceding manual operation of the function switch (or operating pad) as a mistake. The prior art does not disclose or suggest these features.

The Examiner concedes that the above features are not disclosed by Palalau. However, it is the Examiner's contentions that these features are disclosed or suggested by Kushion. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Although Kushion appears to disclose a determination of an error being made when a detected value falls outside a

predetermined range, this reference does not disclose anything about how the preceding manual operation is determined to be a mistake in the manner described by these claims. Claims 1, 9, 21 and 22 are therefore not rendered unpatentable by the combination of these prior art references. Claims 2, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17 and 19 are each dependent on either claim 1 or 9 and are therefore likewise patentable.

Independent claims 3 and 11 are similar to the other independent claims discussed above, but also requires a controller unit that replaces the function of the electronic device with the function of another function switch (or manual operating pad) when the counted number of mistakes reaches a predetermined threshold number. Palalau discloses a "replacing" function, but not in connection with or in response to "mistakes". Kushion discloses "electric failure", but this is clearly different than "mistakes". In addition, there is no basis for the Examiner's suggestion that these two references should be combined. Claims 3 and 11 are therefore not rendered unpatentable by the combination of these prior art references. Claims 4, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 20 are each dependent on either claim 3 or 11 and are therefore likewise patentable.

The pending claims are believed to truly distinguish over the prior art and to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, such allowance is now earnestly requested. If for any reason the Examiner is not able to allow the application, he is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4273.

Respectfully submitted,



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